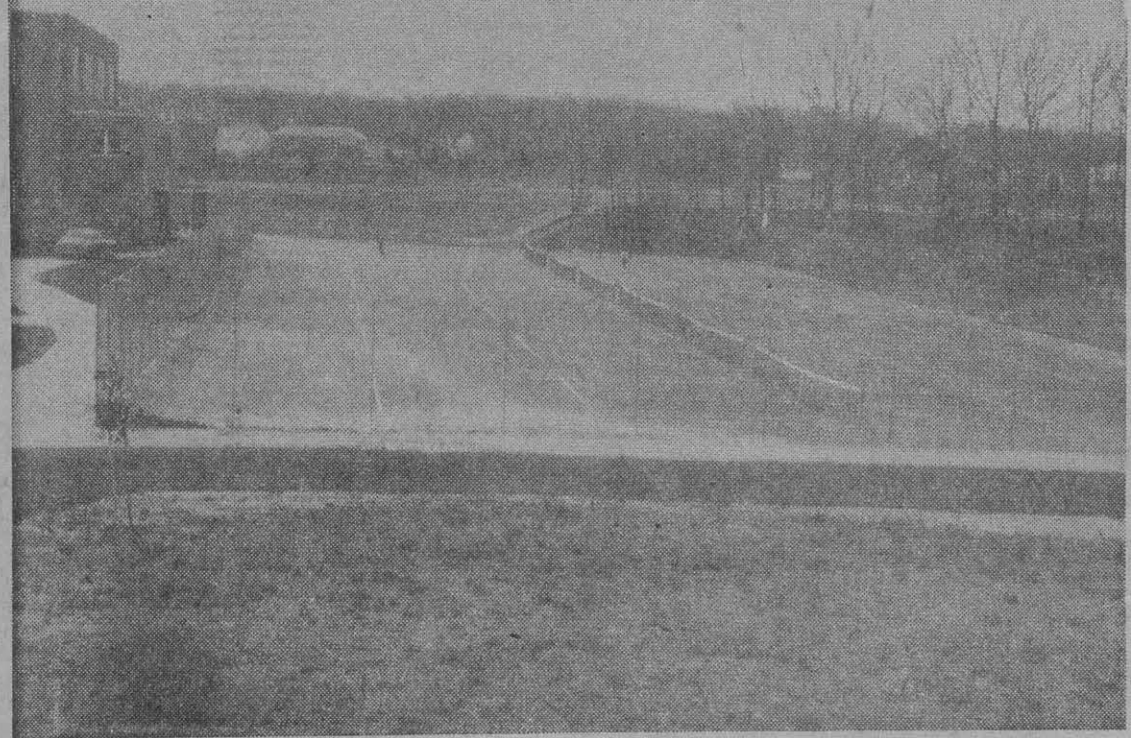


Apr. 20



TENNIS COURTS—At Wakefield High School these six new tennis courts will be utilized to capacity throughout the coming season. Already the public is swarming onto the courts on a first-come, first-serve basis. The courts may also be used by the YMCA which is proposing to lease part of the Wakefield playground for its eight-week program starting June 28.
(Daily Sun Photo by Bill Little)

Y.M.C.A. Would Lease Wakefield Sports Area

By BOB SANDIN

An eight-week program of athletics sponsored by the Arlington branch of the YMCA will be staged on part of the Wakefield High School playground beginning June 28, provided the county School Board gives its approval to present proposals at its next meeting.

The Young Men's Christian Association has been dickering with the school administration for some time now in an effort to lease the

six Wakefield tennis courts, the girls' athletic field with its two softball diamonds, and the girls' auxiliary gymnasium, complete with rest room facilities.

The YMCA has in past years scheduled modest summer programs at its 4½-acre site on North 13th Street, just off Kirkwood Road. Expansive plans are now under way to replace the present old frame building at this location and completely revamp the area into a new playground with all modern facilities.

According to Robert McBride, director of the Arlington YMCA branch, the scope of the development has not been settled, and a figure on the estimated cost is not yet known. Architects are still working on the plans, he said.

In the meantime approximately 350 to 400 children could be accommodated in the YMCA program this summer if the present proposals for leasing the Wakefield playground areas are acceptable. The added cost for leasing the public school property for the eight weeks period would be defrayed by a small additional fee to YMCA members, McBride explained.

W. A. "Buck" Richardson, director of the Arlington County Department of Recreation and Parks, has said that he "does not need" the Wakefield playground to round out his program for the summer months. Richardson explained that the Recreation Department did not use Wakefield last year since it was not at the time completed, and would again utilize the nearby Claremont elementary school playground for children in the immediate area. The Recreation Department regularly takes first priority on operation of the public school grounds, and both supervision and maintenance is provided out of county funds.

A number of inquiries have been made to The Daily Sun during the past week by tennis enthusiasts who wondered if the proposed YMCA program would short-change the Arlington people from using the Wakefield tennis courts.

According to Mort Irwin, assistant principal at Wakefield in charge of buildings and grounds, the six new tennis courts there are now temporarily open to the public, however, the demand has not been as great as was expected. He said he hoped the tennis players could be "encouraged to avail themselves of the Wakefield courts." The courts are now open to the public in the evenings and on weekends while school is still in session.

Mr. Irwin noted that the recent overflow of participants in the Recreation Department Junior Tennis Tourney was also handled at Wakefield when the Four Mile Run courts were being played to capacity.

McBride stated that the YMCA program this summer would also "concentrate on the junior tennis participation."

The YMCA program would only contemplate using the tennis court and other facilities at Wakefield from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., from Monday through Friday, McBride explained. This would allow the County to have jurisdiction of the courts and grounds during the weekends and on weekends when the public demand is to be expected.

The number of local racket wielders in the county has increased by leaps and bounds during the past few years and the demand for court reservations at the Four Mile Run, Lyon Village, and other locations handled by the Recreation Department, is a recognized major operation. The United States Lawn Tennis Association has now given sanction to the Recreation Tournaments and competition continues to grow.

The question of supervision of the grounds, and the cost entailed to protect the public property, continues to concern people who have said they feel that it will be impossible to keep the children — and others — from trespassing on the new football field and elsewhere.

At the present time custodians at the school are keeping a regular watch on the activities going on — and the YMCA has promised to do the same when and if it steps into the picture.

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